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**October 11, 2016**

**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Department of Public Health Offers Free Testing for National Latino AIDS Awareness Day**

**"We'll Defeat AIDS Con Ganas" serves as this year's theme**

**EL PASO, Texas** – More than 2,000 people are living with HIV in El Paso and every year approximately 100 more are diagnosed with the disease. In an effort to lower those numbers, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is commemorating National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD), which is celebrated nationally on October 15 by offering free, confidential testing this week.

"Our fight against this disease is something we do 365 days a year," said Irene Ovalle-Valdez, HIV Prevention Program Manager. "We see National Latino AIDS Awareness day as a chance to target the Hispanic community, which in El Paso makes up a majority of the cases we see."

Every year NLAAD presents a specific theme to underscore the importance of testing, treatment, and prevention of HIV and AIDS. This year's theme is "We'll Defeat AIDS Con Ganas" which loosely translates to "we'll defeat AIDS with great desire or passion." Department officials say they hope their passion for HIV prevention will resonate with other members of the community and empower them to get tested and take the necessary steps to prevent HIV infection.

The HIV Prevention Program will offer **free testing from Wednesday, October 12 through Thursday, October 14** at the center located at **701 Montana Avenue**. Testing will be conducted from **8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** all three days.

### **Background:**

In 2003, NLAAD was established in response to the impact of HIV and AIDS in the Hispanic/Latino communities nationwide, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. NLAAD is a national community mobilization and social marketing campaign that unites the Hispanic/Latino community in efforts to raise HIV awareness, promotion of HIV testing, prevention, and education; in addition to other critical health issues such as viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and tuberculosis (TB).

The mission of the Department of Public Health is to provide research and evaluation, prevention, intervention, and mobilization services to the people of El Paso so they can be healthy, productive, safe, and secure. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, visit [EPHealth.com](http://EPHealth.com) or dial 2-1-1.

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